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## Douglas County Early Childhood Council Strategic Plan 2023-2028 (Updated September 2024)

### DCECC Vision

We strive to ensure all Douglas County families and early learning professionals have an awareness of and equitable access to high quality early childhood services, systems, and supports.

### DCECC Mission

The mission of Douglas County Early Childhood Council is to promote the development of the whole child, birth to five, by fostering collaboration with families and providers. We are dedicated to providing awareness and access to high quality resources and supports; and utilizing community partnerships to ensure every child has a nurturing and responsive early childhood experience.

### DCECC Values

- **Family and Provider Partnerships** - We actively seek to partner with families and providers to benefit young children.
- **Integrity** - We consistently hold ourselves accountable to our mission and vision.
- **Collaboration** - We collaborate with each other and our stakeholders to achieve shared goals.
- **Inclusion** - We embrace the inclusion of all families in early childhood care and education regardless of background, identity and circumstance.
- **Equity** - We believe in providing equitable access to early childhood opportunities and resources
- **Communication** - We communicate information and resources to increase families' understanding of child development and parenting.

### Strategic Focus Areas

DCECC's Board has identified three focus areas under which goals and activities have been developed:

1. Ongoing Support of Existing Programs and Services
2. Expanding Connections with Families and Community partners
3. Organizational Development and Performance.

**Goal 1: Strengthen existing programs and services in order to promote high quality programming for families and children with a focus on promoting school readiness.**

Activity	Measurement	Progress for FY 2024/2025 as of 6/30/25
<p>1.1 Monitor and support programs with an active MOU for CSQI (Colorado Shines Quality Improvement) Services</p> <p>Support and encourage Level 1 programs to move to Level 2</p> <p>Encourage programs at Level 2 to consider seeking an MOU to move to Level 3-5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate the benefits of moving from Level 1 to Level 2 and to Levels 3-5 programs 4 times per year</li> <li>• Report on the progress of programs who complete a Colorado Shines rating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 62 programs with active MOUs</li> <li>• 24 programs applied for rating</li> <li>• 22 programs received a rating between 7/1/24 and 6/30/25 - all of these programs increased their ratings.</li> <li>• 17 programs began at a level 1               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 12 moved to level 2</li> <li>○ 1 moved to level 3</li> <li>○ 4 moved to level 4</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 7 programs began at a level 2               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 3 moved to level 3</li> <li>○ 3 moved to level 4</li> <li>○ 1 moved to level 5</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 1 program began at level 4 and moved to level 5</li> <li>• 8 programs moved down in their rating by allowing their current rating to expire. They were automatically changed to a level 1.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Twenty programs closed during this time period and 24 programs opened.</li> </ul>
1.2 Support implementation of Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) by sharing information on quality standards that will be implemented in 2025 and 2026.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to send out regular informational updates on an as needed basis</li> <li>Hold quarterly meetings focused on the three areas of the quality standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instructional Practices</li> <li>Healthy Development</li> <li>Family &amp; Community Engagement</li> </ul> </li> <li>Form Sub-committees as needed to support quality standards implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First meetings on Quality standards held September 10th and 12th</li> <li>CDEC Rules Committee has decided to push back the implementation of quality standards by one more year, so they will not go into effect until July 2026</li> <li>Implementation of this activity will begin in FY 25/26</li> </ul>
1.3 Increase awareness and understanding of LENA (Language ENVironment Analysis) and maintain support to 16 classrooms per year. Seek opportunities to increase funding for LENA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide information on LENA quarterly</li> <li>Share information on LENA at provider meetings</li> </ul>	<p>During the fiscal year 2024–2025, a total of 16 classrooms across 4 schools in Douglas County actively participated in and completed the LENA Grow 1 program cycle. These included approximately 8 infant/toddler classrooms, 8 preschool classrooms, 22 teachers, and 99 coaching hours—averaging 4.5 hours per teacher.</p> <p>The impact on children varied from classroom to classroom, but ranged from a 60–100% increase in five or more conversational turns (serve-and-return interactions), a 78–100% increase in fifteen or more conversational turns, and a 100% increase in twenty-five or more conversational turns.</p> <p>Individual teachers set initial goals at the beginning of the program and worked with their coach to interpret the data and establish new goals each week. These goals focused on utilizing positive</p>

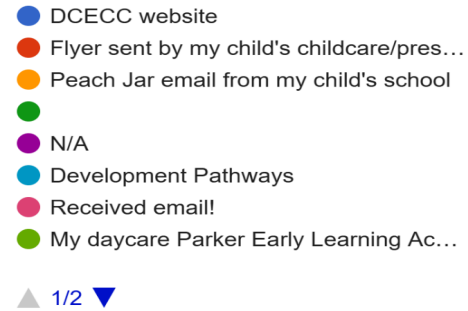
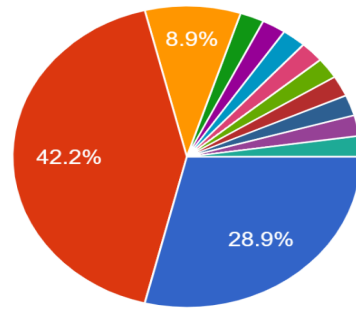
		<p>behavior strategies, increasing conversation during routines and outdoor play, and identifying individual needs or differences within the classroom.</p> <p>At the end of each cycle, all teachers were surveyed about the effectiveness of their coach and whether they felt they gained something from their LENA experience. Out of 22 teachers, 100% agreed that their coaching was effective and that there was a positive impact in their classroom during their LENA cycle.</p>
<p>1.4 Maintain understanding of working with Infants and Toddlers through EQIT (Expanding Quality for Infants and Toddlers) classes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support transfer of learning to classroom by participating in required coaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to offer 4 classes per year</li> <li>Maintain and/or increase number of graduates from baseline of 60</li> <li># of coaching hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 classes complete</li> <li>Coaching hours by class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Class 1 - 43 hours</li> <li>Class 2 - 23 hours</li> <li>Class 3 - 41 hours</li> <li>Class 4 - 5</li> </ul> </li> <li>Participants by class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Class 1 - 20</li> <li>Class 2 - 11</li> <li>Class 3 - 16</li> <li>Class 4 - 7</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>1.5 Support programs with recruitment and retention efforts using</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share information from "<a href="#">Pathways to Success: Colorado's Comprehensive Early Childhood Workforce Plan</a>" developed by CDEC</li> <li>Offer class from Director's Tool Box</li> <li>Establish Director's Round Table</li> </ul>	<p>Provider meeting held October 23, 2024</p> <p>Hiring Fair - DCSD Legacy Campus - Feb. 28, 2025</p>

**Goal 2: Expand support for and connections with families and other community organizations in order to identify gaps in services, eliminate redundancies and ensure families have the opportunity to expand their understanding of effective parenting skills and resources**

Activity	Measurement	Progress for FY 2024/2025 as of 6/30/25
2.1 Continue to offer classes for parents virtually or in person	Calendar of classes with at least 2 classes offered per month	<p>Classes per month</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• July - 3</li> <li>• August - 1</li> <li>• September - 3</li> <li>• October - 3</li> <li>• November - 3</li> <li>• December - 1</li> <li>• January -1</li> <li>• February - 2</li> <li>• March - 3</li> <li>• April - 2</li> <li>• May - 2</li> <li>• June - 2</li> </ul> <p>A total of 658 people signed up for these classes. While they did not all attend, the information from the class was sent to everyone who signed up. We completed a survey of parents.</p> <p>See results in the next row.</p>

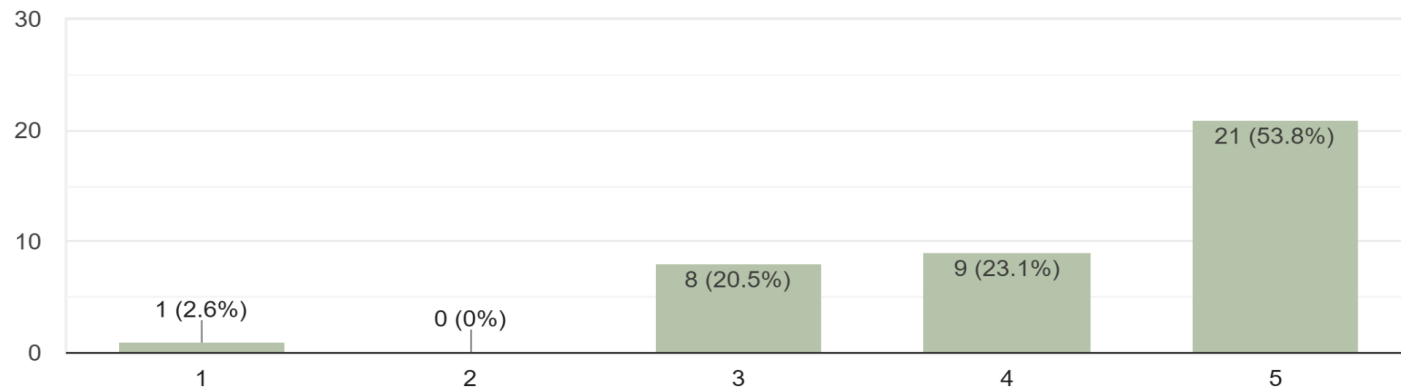
### I learned about the classes from:

45 responses



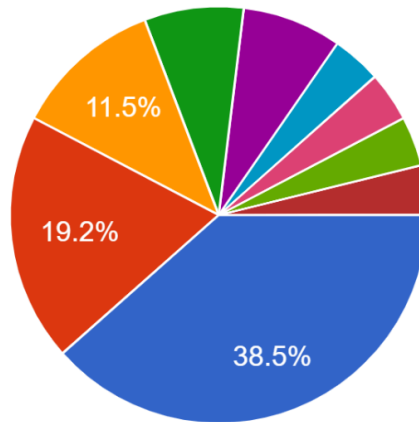
### I attended a class and found it to be...

39 responses



## I signed up for a class, but did not attend because:

26 responses



- I had a conflict arise.
- The time was not convenient.
- I forgot.
- I had trouble with the technology.
- N/A
- Not applicable
- I attended one class and had signed up for a few others hoping to attend but t...
- Children needs
- I attended but needed to leave early d...

2.2 Fold Advocates for Families into Child Maltreatment Prevention Program goals and Healthy Family Partnership as these two groups have all of the same participants and similar goals

Attendance at committee meetings

Goal completion

Implementation of Healthy Family Fun Fest

CMPP Meetings

Community Education Subcommittee:  
2/11, 3/18, 4/15, 5/20



[Learning Opportunities in Douglas County](#)

Healthy Family Fun Fest was held on September 14, 2024

2.3 Attend community events to share information about child development, Universal Pre-K and classes offered by DCECC and increase visibility of Council

Attend at least 3 community events per year

Strive to Thrive - July 30, 2024 and January 28, 2025  
Ready, Set, Read - Sept. 17, 2024 and May 15, 2025  
Older Adult Health and Resource Expo - Feb. 20, 2025  
DCSD Educator Advisory Board - Apr., 28, 2025

		Community Baby Shower - March 28, 2025 Strong Mommas, Thriving Babies - 24 events
2.4 Present at least one back-to-school presentation to prepare parents of children entering kindergarten	Date of meeting and number of parents participating	Class presented on November 6, 2024 45 parents signed up for class 10 parents attended class 22 views of recording of session (4/14/25)
2.5 Drive traffic to website by providing links to resources and supports for parents	Increase number of "hits" to website FY 23      FY 24 Unique Visitors 10,310      17,819 Total Visits      15,806      26,438	July 2024 - April 15, 2025 Unique Visitors - 19,188 Total Visits - 28, 434
2.6 Partner with Douglas County School District and Developmental Pathways to inform families of supports for early intervention needs by distributing information about screening events hosted by DCSD and including information about early intervention on the website	DCSD flyers distributed Gather data on attendance at screening events	 Early Intervention Information for Parents.pdf  ChildFind Free Developmental Screening flye...

### Goal 3: Improve organizational functioning by strengthening relationships and understanding within the Executive Council

Activity	Measurement	Progress for FY 2024/2025 as of 6/30/25
3.1 Examine current practices to identify areas of strength and need related to equity and inclusion as values of DCECC	Written policies related to equity and inclusion	Limited Progress Use some DCECC meetings as work sessions to focus on our goals



<p>3.2 Establish committees and encourage all members to participate in at least one committee</p> <p>Current committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equity and Inclusion Committee</li> <li>• Stakeholder Meeting Planning Committee</li> <li>• Budget/Grant Committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committees Established by September of each year</li> <li>• Agendas and Minutes</li> <li>• Membership recorded</li> </ul>	Limited Progress
<p>3.3 Investigate opportunities to increase funding to support Council priorities through outside grant funders and/or fund raising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possible areas for funding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Expand LENA</li> <li>○ Expand Pyramid Classes</li> <li>○ Additional Mental Health Consultant</li> <li>○ Funds to offer Director's Toolbox Classes</li> <li>○ Funds to offer coaching to programs who are not participating in Colorado Shines</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee formed by September 2024</li> <li>• At least 1 opportunity identified by May 2025</li> </ul>	<p>Determined that a focus on Pyramid classes provides the best learning for providers at the most reasonable cost.</p> <p>Possible funding sources:</p> <p>Use CSQI funds for Pyramid</p> <p>Use Property tax rebates for Pyramid</p> <p>Connect with AD Works to see if they have funding</p> <p>Health Department or County Commissioners for grant for Pyramid</p>
<p>3.4 Provide opportunities for team building and active engagement during DCECC executive council meetings in order to develop into a high functioning team.</p>	<p>Agenda/minutes of DCECC executive council meetings</p>	<p>Each meeting is started with an ice breaker that has allowed for conversations to build relationships.</p>

## School Readiness Quality Improvement Plan

The Colorado School Readiness Quality Improvement Program (SRQIP) is part of the Colorado Shines quality rating and improvement system. The purpose of the program is to improve the school readiness of children, five (5) years of age or younger, who are cared for at early childhood education programs pursuant to section 26.5-5-102, C.R.S. These rules are promulgated pursuant to section 26.5-5-102(6), C.R.S.

### Statement of Need

Douglas County is known for having high quality Pre-K-12 schools. It is crucial that children participating in early childhood education programs are also able to access high quality programming. The county currently has 226 licensed child care programs serving children aged 0-5. Of these programs, 67 have a Colorado

Shines Rating of 3 or above. That number represents only 30% of the programs. It is clear that there is a need to improve quality in Douglas County Early Childhood education programs.

Reviewing the 2023 ECC Shared Measures Report, Douglas County has 4,233 high quality seats for 20,107 children between the ages of 0 and 5, or enough high quality seats to support 21.1% of children. The general capacity to serve children is as follows:

- Infants (0-18 months) - 16.6%
- Toddlers (18-36 months) - 38%
- Preschool (36-60 months) - 120.6%

It is clear that there is a great need to increase capacity for infants and toddlers in Douglas County.

### **Strategies to Improve Quality in Douglas County**

Goal to improve equitable access to learning experiences and childcare environments that are high quality, developmentally appropriate, and affordable by increasing the programs that have a Colorado Shines rating at Level 2 or higher to 60% by the end of the project period from a baseline of 45%.

- Partner with the Douglas County Department of Human Services and childcare programs to increase the number of CCCAP fiscal agreements in Douglas County by sending informational emails to providers and sharing information at in-person meetings
- Increase the percentage of Level 2-5 programs to 60% or higher by promoting and implementing the Colorado Shines program by sending informational emails to providers and sharing information at in-person meetings
- Strategically manage CSQI funding to support the greatest number of programs within CDEC allocations
- Provide on-site or virtual coaching and consultation supports using a menu of evidence-based coaching services
- Promote family involvement by continuing to offer classes for parents virtually or in person

### **Memorandum of Understanding**

DCECC executes MOUs with as many providers who apply as possible within the CDEC funding allocation.

### **Funding Priorities**

When there are not enough funds for every interested program, DCECC prioritizes programs that support children with identified risk factors. All school district classrooms are supported to ensure children with IEPs are well served.